



# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' NET: OR CATCHING THE REDCOATS AND TORIES. BY HARRY MOORE.



Just as the two British officers reached the other end of the bridge, Dick and his boys rushed from their ambush and called upon them to surrender



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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)



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## CHAPTER I.

### IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A frien'."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"I dunno no countersine, mister; but I'm er frien', jes' ther same."

Time: The month of May, 1777.

Place: A little opening in the timber bordering the bank of the Raritan River in New Jersey, at a point five or six miles from New Brunswick.

Scene: A party of British soldiers encamped.

It was about six o'clock in the evening.

The soldiers were engaged in cooking their suppers at the several camp-fires, which were burning briskly in the opening in the timber.

Sentinels had been posted, and it was one of these who had uttered the challenge with which we open this story.

The person challenged was a youth of perhaps nineteen years of age.

He was dressed in a rough and worn suit of homespun, had on an old clouch hat and coarse shoes.

To the ordinary observer the person in question would have been set down as a green, country youth, but a close observer might have suspected that he was otherwise.

The face was bright and handsome, the features regular and strong, the eyes keen and piercing.

This youth was not what he seemed to be, by any means.

He was Dick Slater, known far and wide as one of the best scouts and spies in the patriot army.

Indeed, so wonderful had been his doings, so daring was he, and such splendid work had he done as a spy that he had earned and had been given the name of "The Champion Spy of the Revolution."

And Dick was on a spying expedition now.

The British army was encamped at New Brunswick.

It numbered eighteen thousand men.

The patriot army was encamped at Morristown, and numbered perhaps twelve thousand.

The two armies had occupied their present positions

for several months, having gone into quarters there soon after the battle of Trenton, on Christmas morning.

Dick had been on his way to New Brunswick, where he hoped to be able to find out something regarding the intentions of the British.

It was summer now, and General Washington was of the opinion that the redcoats would make some kind of a move soon.

Of course, it was important that he know what the move was to be.

If he could learn in advance what move was contemplated, it would give him a big advantage and would enable him to checkmate the move.

So he had sent Dick, with instructions to learn the plans of the British, if possible.

Dick had disguised himself as a country boy of the region, and was making his way toward New Brunswick on horseback, when he saw the smoke curling up above the treetops, to the right of the road.

He was accompanied at the time by a friend and chum, Bob Estabrook.

They had come to a stop, and Dick gave Bob some instructions.

"You stay here and take care of my horse," he said; "I will go and investigate that fire. The chances are that it marks the spot where some redcoats are encamped, and if such is the case, I am going to try to join the British army, and enter the British encampment at New Brunswick in the guise of a new recruit. In case, therefore, I do not return before nightfall, you return to Morristown with my horse."

"All right, Dick," Bob had replied, and then Dick had stolen into the timber at the side of the road and made his way in the direction of the point whence came the smoke from the camp-fires.

As he had expected, when he got close enough to see, he saw that he had struck an encampment of British soldiers.

There were perhaps fifty of the redcoats, and Dick decided that it was a foraging party.

The fact that they were loaded down with all kinds of plunder in the way of clothing and provisions proved this.



They had undoubtedly robbed several farmhouses, and were on their way back to the main encampment, but being tired, had encamped for the night, intending to finish the journey to New Brunswick in the morning.

As we have seen, Dick was challenged on reaching the edge of the encampment.

The challenge of the sentinel had attracted the attention of the redcoats, and they were looking toward the point where Dick and the sentinel were, with interested eyes.

"What hav you struck, Hardy?" cried one.

"Who is it?" from another.

"And what is it?" from still another, as Dick emerged from the edge of the timber, and appeared in sight, near the sentinel.

"I don't know, boys," the sentinel replied; and then he eyed Dick, sternly, and asked:

"Who are you?"

"Me?" asked Dick, innocently.

He was a good actor, and he had assumed a look of ignorance and dullness.

"Yes, you. Who are you?"

"Oh, I'm on'y Tom Todd."

"Tom Todd, eh?"

"Yes, sir; thet's my name."

"He says his name is Tom Todd, boys!" called out the sentinel.

"All right," was the reply from one of the redcoats; "tell him to toddle along over here. We want to see what he looks like at close range."

"You can enter," the sentinel said, stepping aside.

There was a peculiar look, a half-grin on his face, and Dick, who was a good judge of expression, interpreted the look to mean that the sentinel thought the country youth was to be put through a course of sprouts.

"All right; we'll see!" thought Dick. "They may have fun with me, and then, again, they may not. I may have some fun with them; stranger things have happened."

Dick made his way forward, till he reached the point where the redcoats were gathered near the fires, cooking their suppers, and then he stopped and looked around, with an embarrassed air and silly grin which would have fooled much closer observers than were these redcoats.

Dick looked the green, backward country youth to the life.

The redcoats stared at Dick for a few moments in silence and then burst into a roar of laughter.

Dick stared at the soldiers in pretended amazement.

"Whut's so funny, misters?" he asked, when he was enabled to make himself heard. "Whut air ye larfin'

erbout? Jes' tell me, an' I'll larf, too. I likes ter larf, does."

This caused the redcoats to go off into another fit of laughter.

"Say, he is a fine bird, isn't he?"

"He is, for a fact!"

"He looks like one of the monks out of the London Zoo!"

"You are right."

"Yes, you've hit it!"

"He is green enough to grow."

"It's a wonder the cows don't eat him!"

"Thet makes me think, misters," broke in Dick, interrupting the remarks of the redcoats, "but hev enny uv ye seen ennythin' uv er red cow aroun' heer? She's got a black stripe aroun' her neck, an' one uv her horns is broke off erbout six inches from her head. She didn't come hum las' night, an' I've be'n a-huntin' fur her all day ter-day."

Again the redcoats laughed.

This was fun for them.

They thought Dick was just what he seemed to be, a simple country youth, and they had made up their minds to have all the sport possible out of him.

"No, I haven't seen anything of such a cow as you describe," replied one. "Have you, boys?" to the rest.

"No," replied another, gravely. "I saw a blue cow but did not see a red one."

"I saw a green one, out yonder among the trees, a little while ago," declared still another.

"Oh, go 'long, you fellers!" said Dick; "you never seen no blue er green cow! Theer hain't no sech things."

"What! Do you mean to say that you doubt our word?" cried one of the redcoats.

"Why, you ignorant booby, I'll knock the head clean off your shoulders if you dare to insinuate that I lie!" cried the other redcoat, who had claimed that he had seen a green cow.

"Oh, I don't say ye lie, mister," said Dick, "but I'd a heap sight rather see them theer blue an' green cows than ter b'leeve thet their wuz sech things!"

"Oh, you would, would you?"

The redcoat, who was a sort of bully and a hot-headed fellow, rose and approached Dick as he spoke.

There was an angry look on his face, and a threatening glare in his eyes, and Dick made up his mind that the fellow meant to give him some trouble.

But the youth was ready to meet the fellow half way.

"If he wants to pick a fight with me, all right," the youth said to himself; "it will help my plans to show th



rest that I can fight, and I shall give him all he wants of that sort of work."

So in answer to the redcoat's fierce, "you would, would you?" Dick replied that he would.

"And you'd rather see the blue and the green cows than to take our word that there are such things?"

"Yep; that's whut I would, mister," Dick replied, promptly.

A peculiar, hard, dangerous smile appeared on the redcoat's face.

"I can't show you the cows, my young friend," he said, "but I'll tell you what I can and will show you."

Dick had a pretty good idea what the man meant, but he assumed a look of ignorance and asked:

"Whut, mister?"

"The most brilliant meteoric display that it has ever been your good or bad fortune to witness!"

"Er metyorric display? Whut's thet, mister?" asked Dick, innocently.

"Why, shooting stars, and all that sort of thing."

"Oh! An' whut's a-goin' ter make 'em?"

"This!" and the redcoat held his fist in front of Dick's face.

"Thet?" in surprise.

"Yes."

"But how is yer fist ergoin' ter make them theer shootin' stars, mister?"

"Easy enough. I am going to hit you between the eyes with that fist, and if, when you get up, after I have knocked you down, you do not say that you have seen about a million shooting stars, then you may have my head for a football!"

Dick's face suddenly lighted up as though he had just come to an understanding of the other's meaning.

"Oh, ye're a-goin' ter knock me down, air ye, mister?" he exclaimed. "An' thet is whut'll make me see them heer stars an' things?"

"Yes, that is just what I am going to do!"

Then Dick surprised the redcoat and all his comrades by saying, in the most calm and matter-of-fact manner imaginable:

"I'll bet ye er cookie thet ye lie, mister!"

## CHAPTER II.

### A LIVELY COUNTRY YOUTH.

The redcoat stared at Dick for a few moments in paralyzed amazement.

His comrades did the same.

They could hardly bring themselves to think they had heard aright.

"W-what is t-that you s-say?" gasped the redcoat, his arm falling to his side. "Y-you don't m-mean to say that—that——"

"I mean ter say thet ef ye say thet ye air goin' ter knock me down, ye lie!" said Dick. "Ye kain't do et!"

The redcoat became very angry now.

He had gotten over his surprise, and his anger had full play.

"Why, you young fool, I'll half kill you, that's what I'll do!" he almost howled. "The idea of a booby like you talking to one of the king's soldiers in such a fashion as that!"

"Say, I'd like ter be one uv ther king's soldiers, an' wear a purty soot uv clo'es like your'n, mister," said Dick.

"Bah! A fine soldier you would make!"

"I'd make jes' ez fine er soldier ez ye air, an' I'll bet onter et!" declared Dick.

"Bah! you'd run like a scared dog at the first fire from the enemy!"

"I'll bet ye I wouldn't; I'm jes' ez brave ez ye air!"

"Bah! you couldn't fight!"

"I kin fight, an' I'll prove et, too, by givin' ye er good lickin', ef ye darst ter try ter hit me, mister!"

The redcoat grew black with rage, and his comrades laughed.

"Why, you young idiot, you couldn't whip me in a hundred years!" the redcoat cried.

"I kin whup ye in er hunderd seckonds!" the supposed country youth declared, confidently.

Then a thought seemed to occur to him, and he turned toward the men seated near, watching the scene with interest, and said:

"Say, ye fellers, ef I'll whup this heer feller, will ye let me jine ther king's army an' wear one uv them purty soots uv clo'es?"

"Yes, yes!" was the reply in chorus. "Whip him, and we'll let you join us."

"And you can have two suits of clothes, if you wish!" one added.

"All right; thet's er barg'in!" cried Dick. "I'll whup this heer feller outer his boots, by jucks!"

"Yes, you will!" cried the redcoat, who was almost beside himself with rage at the audacity of the supposed country youth. "Why, I'll half kill you!"

"Oh, I think not, mister."

Dick was cool and apparently unconcerned.

"I know! Look out for yourself!"



"I'm lookin' out, mister."

The redcoats were watching the affair with interest.

Of course, they thought that Dick would stand no chance with their comrade, who was known as a fighter of no mean ability, but the strange youth's pluck had won their admiration, though they attributed it to ignorance more than to bravery.

"He don't know enough to know he is in danger," was their thought.

This was the thought of the fellow who was confronting Dick.

It was for this reason that he had been so slow in attacking.

He was afraid the others would accuse him of taking unfair advantage of the youth's ignorance, so he hesitated even yet to make the attack.

He turned to his comrades.

"I don't want to hurt the fool, boys," he said; "I guess——"

"Oh, don't ye be afeerd," interposed Dick; "ye won't hurt me enny. Don't ye worry er mite!"

"Say, he is such a bigoted young scoundrel that I shall have to give him a dressing down, I guess," the redcoat declared.

"If ye kin!" grinned Dick.

The youth felt sure that unless he proved to the redcoats that he was a good fighter, they would not let him join them, and so it was his game to egg the fellow on.

He felt confident that he could thrash the redcoat, and this would have the effect of making the rest listen to him when he asked to be allowed to join the British army.

A growl escaped the lips of the redcoat, and he made a forward step.

"Look out for yourself!" he warned, "I am going to give it to you, good and hard!"

"An' ye look out fur yerself, mister!" retorted Dick. "I'm ergoin' ter giv' et ter ye good an' hard, too."

For answer the redcoat struck out at the youth.

The blow was not so very hard, and was carelessly delivered.

The man evidently thought the youth knew nothing at all about fighting, and that he would not have to exert himself at all in the contest, so he had simply struck a moderately hard blow.

He had aimed at the youth's face, and, of course, expected the blow to reach the mark aimed at.

Great was his astonishment, then, when Dick moved his head to one side a trifle, and allowed the fist to pass over his left shoulder.

Dick stepped back, laughed and said:

"Try erg'in, mister."

Exclamations of amazement escaped the lips of the onlookers.

All were surprised, and the one who had delivered the blow was more surprised than any of the others.

An exclamation of anger and disgust escaped him.

"Oh, you can dodge, can you?" he remarked, again stepping forward and drawing back to strike.

"Yep, I kin dodge, mister," replied Dick.

"Then dodge this—if you can!"

He struck out, as he spoke.

He struck quickly, fiercely and viciously.

It was his intention to knock the supposed country booby down and out at one blow.

The youth had dodged the first blow, and evaded it, but he would not do this one that way.

So the redcoat thought.

But he was mistaken.

He was dealing with one who was not only an experienced sparrer, but a natural athlete as well; one who was as strong as most men, and as lithe and active as a panther.

Dick easily evaded the blow by ducking to the right, and at the same time, out shot his left arm.

His fist caught the redcoat squarely in the chest, and he was hurled backward a distance of six or eight feet.

The redcoat gave utterance to a grunt of pain, but managed to keep from falling.

Exclamations escaped the lips of his comrades.

"Great Guns!"

"Jupiter Pluvius, what a lick!"

"That was almost equal to the kick of an army mule!"

"I guess Hardy thinks so, anyway!"

And Hardy evidently did think so, if the look on his face was any indication.

He had clasped his hands on his stomach, and there was a look of pain on his face.

The blow had struck right at the pit of the stomach, the most vulnerable spot of the human body, and had made him sick at his stomach.

"I told ye I c'u'd whup 'im," said Dick, calmly; "he ha'f whupped now."

"It's a lie!" cried the redcoat. "You took me by surprise, that time, and got in a chance blow, but you won't do it again, and I'm going to pound the life half out of you in just about a minute!"

"I think et'll take ye more'n er minnet, mister," remarked Dick, coolly; "in fack, I don' b'leeve ye kin do et tall."

"Bah! because you happened to strike me one blow, you have, no doubt, become imbued with the idea that you



can do it again. I will quickly show you that you are mistaken."

"Mebby so; but I doubts et, mister."

The redcoat had now recovered his breath, and gotten over the temporary feeling of sickness, and he once more advanced to the attack.

He was more cautious, now, however.

Although he had said that the blow which the youth had dealt him was an accidental one, he was somewhat dubious about it.

He begun to think that it might be possible that this seemingly green country youth might be considerable of a fighter.

Still, he had no doubt of his ability to dispose of the youth.

"Now look out!" he cried, as he came close. "I'm going to go for you in earnest, now!"

"Ye look out yerself, mister!" retorted Dick.

A hoarse growl was the only reply vouchsafed.

Then the redcoat rushed forward, and began showering blows upon the youth.

It was evidently his game to knock the youth out quickly.

He struck out rapidly and fiercely.

Had Dick not been an expert in the art of parrying blows, he would have been knocked down very quickly; but he was used to this kind of work, and he ducked, dodged, evaded and parried, and in spite of all the redcoat could do he could not land a solid blow to save his life.

The exertion began to tell on the redcoat.

He was not used to it.

He commenced to puff and pant.

But he kept at it, in a desperate attempt to land a blow which would end the affair at one stroke.

But Dick was on the watch, and did not intend that his opponent should do this.

He had been struck several times, of course—in such a rain of blows, it could not be otherwise—but he had managed it so that the blows did no damage, being glancing and therefore without force.

Presently the chance Dick had been waiting for came.

The redcoat became so exhausted by the violence of his exertions that he was forced to pause to regain his breath.

His hands seemed to him as if they weighed a ton, and he let them drop at his side.

The thought that his opponent might do something in the hitting line had not struck him, but something else did.

It was Dick's fist.

The instant the redcoat dropped his hands, the youth

stepped in, measured the distance carefully, and struck out straight from the shoulder.

His fist struck the man fair between the eyes.

Smack!

The noise made by the blow was similar to that made by the palms of one's hands when struck sharply together.

Over backward went the redcoat, as if he had been struck by a cannon-ball.

Down upon his back on the ground he went, with a jar that almost shook the earth.

The spectators gave a gasp of amazement and wonder.

### CHAPTER III.

#### DICK'S PLAN SUCCEEDS.

"Whew!"

"Did you ever!"

"I never did!"

"That beats anything I ever saw!"

"Yes, and anything I ever expect to see!"

"It was the prettiest stroke I ever saw delivered!"

Such were a few of the exclamations given utterance to by the redcoats.

The fact of the matter was that the fellow, Hardy, was a sort of bully, and they were glad, than otherwise, to see him knocked down in such a neat manner.

Hardy himself was so dazed by the terrible stroke, and by the jar of the fall, that he was incapable of making a movement for a few moments.

Indeed it was nearly a minute before he made an attempt to sit up.

And when he did succeed in getting to a sitting posture, he was still so muddled that he seemed not to have an understanding of what had really happened.

He looked around him in a dazed manner and winked and blinked like a man suddenly aroused from a sound sleep.

The fellow's comrades watched him with interest.

They could not refrain from guying him a bit.

"Hello, Hardy! Have you been taking a nap?" queried one.

"How do you feel, anyway, old fellow?" from another.

"Did you count the stars?" from a third.

This aided in arousing Hardy to a realization of what had taken place.

He scrambled to his feet with a cry of rage.

His eyes fell on Dick, who stood at a little distance, calmly surveying his opponent.



A hoarse growl, not unlike that given utterance to by a wild beast when prodded by his keeper, escaped the redcoat.

"You young scoundrel!" he hissed. "I'll have your life for this. I'll kill you, as sure as my name is Hardy!"

"My dad allers sez ez how threatened men lives er long time," the youth remarked, calmly.

The redcoat advanced upon Dick.

He said nothing, but his eyes looked murder.

Dick saw that the man meant mischief.

"He is desperate now," thought Dick, "and I will have to look out for him. Let's see; what will be his game?"

A moment's thought caused the youth to come to the conclusion that his opponent would try to come to close quarters this time.

The fellow's actions quickly caused him to feel sure that he had guessed correctly.

The redcoat advanced slowly, and seemed desirous of getting in close.

"He is not going to strike at me," thought Dick; "it is his game to leap in and seize me. He undoubtedly thinks he is stronger than I am, and imagines that if he can get his hands on me he will have no difficulty in handling me. Well, let him think so. I will speedily convince him to the contrary, for I feel confident that I am as strong as he, and I am willing to have the matter put to a test."

Thinking thus, Dick simply stood on the defensive and waited for his opponent to make the attack.

It was not long in coming.

Suddenly the redcoat leaped forward and seized hold of Dick.

To his surprise, he did not get the hold he had intended to get.

In some manner the youth gave a quick, twisting movement, and evaded the other's grasp to the extent that while he got a hold, it was not a very good one; on the other hand, Dick had secured a splendid hold.

The youth was a splendid wrestler, and he had no doubt of his ability to get the better of the redcoat in a contest of that kind.

The fellow gave a grunt of satisfaction when he felt Dick within his grasp, but his grunt of satisfaction was premature, and he presently uttered a cry of dismay when he felt himself lifted bodily in the strong arms of the youth.

Dick had succeeded in getting the redcoat's head under his right arm, and then, using his left hip as a lever, he lifted the man from the ground.

Up into the air went the fellow's heels, and then to the surprise of all the youth threw his opponent clear over

his head, having given him what is known as a "cross buck" fall.

The redcoat struck the earth with a thud, and this time he lay still.

The shock of the fall had rendered him unconscious.

A chorus of exclamations escaped the spectators.

"Wonderful!"

"That beats anything I ever saw!"

"The boy understands his business."

"He is the best wrestler I ever laid eyes on."

"Jove! I wonder if he has killed Hardy?"

"Oh, I don't think so."

"No; he is only stunned."

"No, he hain't dead, misters," the youth said; "he'll be all right purty soon. I never did kill ennybuddy, an' I've throwed a heap uv fellers thet erway, too, ye bet!"

The redcoats stared at Dick in wonder.

What manner of youth was this who talked so calmly of having thrown lots of persons, and who had handled one of their number so roughly?

Certainly the youth was a wonder.

"So you are a wrestler, are you?" queried one, looking at Dick with interest.

"Yep; I'm the champeen wras'ler uv our deestrick, an' thar hain't none uv ther boys ez kin stan' up ter me."

"I can well believe that."

"Say," said Dick, with assumed eagerness, "I whupped him, didn't I?"

The redcoat nodded.

"Yes, I think I can truthfully say that you did."

"Then ye'll let me jine ther king's army, won't ye?"

The man hesitated.

"So far as I am concerned, you may do so," he replied; "but I am not the one to say. Ask the captain."

"Whur is ther captin?"

One of the soldiers stepped forward and confronted Dick. He had been very quiet, having had little to say, but now he addressed the youth.

"So you wish to join the king's army?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, I'd like ter jine, ef ye hev no 'bjeckshuns," replied Dick.

"How old are you?"

Dick scratched his head.

He played the part of the green, country youth of that region to perfection, and pretended to be puzzled.

"I reely dunno how old I am, mister," he replied; "but I guess I am erbout twenty-five years old."

The officer smiled.

"Oh, I don't think you are so old as that," he said; "you are about eighteen."



Dick nodded assent.

"I guess ye're right," he said.

"Anything to suit me, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you say your name is?"

"Tom Todd."

"Tom Todd, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where do you live, Tom?"

"'Bout ten miles frum heer."

"So far as that?"

Dick nodded.

"I guess so," he said.

"In which direction?"

Dick pointed toward the northwest.

"In thet direckshun."

"How came you to be so far from home?"

"I wuz a-huntin' our ole cow. She bruck out uv ther pastur las' night, an' I hev be'n a-lookin' fur 'er all day."

"Oh, that is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have parents, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what would they say to your joining the army?"

"I dunno."

"Would they object?"

"I don't think so; in fac' I'm sure uv et."

"Well, we can risk it if you can, if you wish to join the army, I'm willing."

"Oh, thank ye, mister!" cried Dick, pretending to be highly delighted. "I've be'n a-wantin' ter jine ther army fur er long time, an' now I'm mighty glad thet ther chance hez cum at last."

"All right; you may now consider yourself to be one of the king's soldiers."

"Good fur thet; an' will I git ter wear a purty red suit uv clo'es like your'n?"

"Oh, yes, you'll have a suit like this."

"Jucks, that'll be fine!"

The officer smiled.

"It may not be as nice to be a soldier as you think for, my boy," he said; "when it comes to roughing it and engaging in battles, I don't think you will like it very well."

"I'll risk thet, mister; I ain't afeerd ter rough et, an' I kin fight, too. Didn't I jes' give thet feller er good lickin'?"

"Oh, yes; but that is a different kind of fighting from what you will encounter on the field of battle."

"I know thet, mister, but I wanter jine ther army, an' I hain't ergoin' ter let ye skeer me out."

"Oh, that's all right, I wasn't trying to scare you; I just wished to let you know that it wouldn't be the most pleasant thing in the world to be a soldier."

"I'll like et."

The redcoat who had been thrown by Dick and rendered unconscious, was now coming to.

His comrades had thrown water in his face and now, while a couple held him in a sitting posture, one held a flask to his lips.

There was liquor in the flask, and a few swallows of the potent fluid revived the redcoat wonderfully.

After a few minutes he was able to rise to his feet and walk about.

He favored Dick with a glare of hate, but had nothing to say to him.

He had tested the youth's abilities in both the fighting and wrestling lines and he did not care to have anything further to do with him, at least, not just at that time.

He was of a revengeful nature, however, and deep down in his heart he registered an oath that he would get even with the youth who had handled him so roughly.

Dick sized the fellow up about right.

"He has a wicked eye," the youth said to himself; "and while I remain in the British encampment I will have to look out for him."

The youth did not feel any particular fear, however.

He had the utmost confidence in himself and believed that he would be able to take care of himself.

Indeed, he was well satisfied with the situation.

He considered that he was fortunate in having run across this band of redcoats, for on the morrow he would be enabled to enter New Brunswick in their company as one of them.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TROUBLE AHEAD.

Dick did enter New Brunswick next morning, in company with the redcoats.

They were on horseback, while he was on foot, but the trip from the place where they had been encamped, to the town, was made at a slow gait, so the youth had no trouble in keeping along with them.

No particular attention was paid to Dick.

The sentinel had asked the captain of the band who the



youth was, and the officer had replied that he was a new recruit.

This had been sufficient to permit Dick to enter the town.

And once inside, Dick felt that he was all right.

"If I don't succeed in finding out something of interest, it will be strange!" he said to himself.

One of the redcoats, a good-looking, good-natured young fellow of perhaps twenty years of age, took a liking to Dick, and took him to his quarters.

When they were there he brought out a uniform, and told Dick to put it on.

"You will look like the rest of us, then, and will not be so noticeable, which, I take it, you do not fancy," the redcoat said.

"Ye're right; an' thank ye," said Dick.

Then he doffed the old suit of homespun and donned the red uniform of the British soldier.

Harold Morton was the name of the redcoat who had taken Dick under his wing, so to speak.

He confided to the youth that he and Hardy were enemies.

"We both like the same girl, 'back in England," Morton explained, "and, of course, being rivals, we cannot like each other very well."

"I s'pose not," agreed Dick. And then he asked:

"Which one uv ye does ther gal like ther best?"

Morton looked sober for a few moments.

"I really believe that she likes me the best, Tom," he said; "but Hardy's folks are rich, while mine are not; and her parents favor Hardy."

"I see; but if ther gal likes ye best, ye're all right, hain't ye?"

"Well, yes, I think I am."

After some further talk, Morton said:

"You will have to look out for Hardy; he is a vicious fellow, and will be likely to try to have revenge on you in some way."

"I'll keep my eyes on 'im," said Dick.

"You will do well to do so."

"What do you think he will try to do?"

"It is impossible to say; you will just have to keep your eyes open and watch him."

Could the two have seen Hardy at that very moment, and heard what was passing between him and a chum of his, they would have realized that they were right in thinking he would try to get revenge.

Hardy had quarters in a house only a few doors from the one occupied by Morton, and he had gone there at once, on reaching New Brunswick.

The chum in question was Hardy's roommate.

He was a big fellow, six feet tall, and large in proportion.

He was a dark-faced, bearded fellow, with the look of a villain, and he was a notorious gambler and army desperado, having killed three or four men in duels over cards.

Hardy was quite a card-player, too, and the two had arranged it so that they played partners a great deal, and they had signals which enabled them to know what each other held, and thus they were in a position, always, to play to the best advantage, and were usually successful in winning from their companions.

In addition, if the cards were not running good for the two, the big desperado, Gilbert Buggsley, did not scruple to aid fortune by dealing himself and partner good hands, he being expert with the cards and able to do about what he pleased with them.

He had been accused of cheating on more than one occasion, however, and out of those accusations had grown the duels in which he had killed several of his comrades.

It so happened that Gilbert Buggsley was in the room when Robert Hardy, his chum reached it.

He was engaged in practicing with cards, working on a trick which was intended to make him more certain of winning.

He looked up as Hardy entered, and an exclamation of amazement escaped him.

"Hello!" he cried. "Where, in the name of all that is wonderful, did you get that pair of black eyes?"

A terrible look of anger came over Hardy's face.

"Do they look so terribly bad, Gil?" he asked.

"Look bad? Well, I should say so! I tell you, you have as pretty a pair of black eyes as I ever saw. Where did you get them? Which one of the boys did it? Or did three or four jump onto you?"

"It wasn't any of the boys, Gil."

The other looked surprised.

"No?" he ejaculated.

"No."

"Who was it, then?"

Hardy had closed the door, and now he took a seat at the opposite side of the table.

"Did you see us when we rode into town just now?" he asked.

"Yes; I looked out of the window as you were passing."

The window of the room they were in looked down upon the street.

"Did you notice a fellow on foot?"

"Yes; an awkward, green-looking country booby in blue homespun."



Hardy nodded.

"Exactly," he said; "that is the fellow I have reference to. Well, he isn't awkward, by any means."

Buggsley looked at Hardy, questioningly.

"What do you mean?" he asked, slowly. "Surely you are not going to tell me that that country booby——"

"Gave me this pair of black eyes?" bitterly. "Yes, I am going to tell you that very thing. He is the fellow who did it."

A whistle of amazement escaped the lips of the other. He stared at his companion as if he could not bring himself to believe that he had heard aright.

"Is that the truth, really and truly?" he asked.

"Yes, it is the truth, as sure as that I sit here."

"But I can't understand it. How did he do it, Rob?"

"I don't know. I thought I would have an easy time disposing of him, but when we got at it I couldn't do a thing."

"You couldn't?"

"No. I tried my hardest, but I couldn't touch him. He is quick as lightning, and knows considerable about sparring, too. And he can hit harder than any man I ever encountered."

The other listened, with a look of amazement, not un-mixed with unbelief on his face.

"Say, Rob, you must have had too much liquor aboard, didn't you?" he queried.

In thinking the matter over, he had come to the conclusion that his chum had been befuddled with liquor, but the other shook his head.

"I hadn't drunk a bit of brandy, Gil."

"You hadn't?"

"No; I was all right, so far as that goes, and was at myself, but this green-looking country booby is a terror, as sure as you live!"

The other looked thoughtful.

"He must be," he remarked, presently.

"Oh, he is; there isn't any doubt about that."

"And he was too much for you in a fight, eh?"

"Yes; he knocked me down twice, and each time I felt as if a house had fallen on me."

"Why didn't you close in on him, then, when you found he was too much for you with his fists? You are certainly stronger than he, and would have been able to break him in two."

Hardy shook his head.

"No, I tried that," he said.

"You did?"

"Yes."

"And he was too much for you?"

There was surprise and wonder in Buggsley's tone.

Hardy nodded.

"Yes; he threw me clear over his head!"

"Ha! he gave you the cross-buttock fall!"

"I think that is what you call it. It jarred the senses out of me, and I was unconscious several minutes, I guess."

"Well, well! This beats anything I ever heard of. Say, do you know, I am interested by what you have told me."

"I wish you would be interested enough in it to go for that young scoundrel, and break his neck for me!" almost hissed Hardy.

He looked the other in the face, eagerly, as he spoke.

Buggsley was a larger and more powerful man than Hardy.

In truth, he was a bully and desperado, and there were very few who cared to incur his enmity.

He had the reputation of being a very dangerous man.

"I fancy I could handle this terror of yours without much trouble," said Buggsley, complacently.

He threw out his chest and stretched out his arm, working it back and forth, as if exercising the muscles, as he spoke.

"Oh, you could do it, all right, Gil!" Hardy hastened to say. "He wouldn't stand any chance with you, if he did succeed in getting the better of me."

"Yes, he would stand a chance—a chance to get struck by lightning!"

Buggsley smiled, fiendishly, as he spoke.

Hardy followed up the subject closely.

"Say, go in and give that young scoundrel a good thrashing, won't you, old man?" he asked.

"I'm willing," was the reply; "but how am I to work it?"

"That will not be difficult; you know Harold Morton?"

"Oh, yes; not so well as you do, perhaps," with a grin, "but I know him. He is in our mess, you know."

"Yes; well, he has taken this booby under his wing."

The other nodded.

"I understand; he is friendly toward the booby because he thrashed you, whom he hates."

"That is it, I judge. Well, Morton has taken the booby under his wing, and will bring him into our mess, without a doubt."

"Say," exclaimed Buggsley, in surprise, "has the country youth joined the army?"

"Oh, yes; he is one of the king's soldiers now."

"Oh, ho! Well, I will have plenty of chance to pick a fuss with him, then."

"Yes; you won't have to rush matters."

"That is lucky, for if I rushed matters, some of the boys



might get it into their heads that it was a put up job between you and I."

"You are right; but having plenty of time, you can go slow and manage to get on a quarrel of your own with the booby."

"So I can; and, Rob, old man, I'll fix him for the hospital. You shall have full measure of revenge."

"Thanks, old man. I hope you will succeed."

"Oh, there isn't any doubt about that. Just let me get at him, once, and he will think a hurricane has struck him!"

"You mustn't hold him too cheaply, Gil," warned Hardy; "that was what I did, and the result was that I got terribly thrashed."

"Oh, I won't hold him too cheaply; but the idea that he will be dangerous to a man like me, is absurd. He will be as a ten-year-old boy in my hands."

"You will find him to be the equal of almost any man you ever encountered, Gil."

"Well, I have easily disposed of every man I have encountered, haven't I?"

"Oh, yes."

"And I'll do the same with this booby; don't you worry for an instant."

When the dinner hour came, Buggsley had an opportunity of sizing Dick up.

The youth sat nearly opposite the ruffian at the table, and Buggsley eyed Dick closely and searchingly.

Dick, who had his eyes about him, took note of this.

After dinner was over, Hardy and Buggsley went up to their room to smoke.

"Well," said Hardy, when they had their cigars going, "you saw the country youth?"

The other nodded.

"Yes, I saw him."

There was a preoccupied air about Buggsley that was noted by his comrade.

"What do you think of him?"

"I think that I will have no trouble at all in disposing of him, Rob."

"I didn't know. You look thoughtful."

"Oh, that is on account of something else."

"Something else, eh?"

"Yes; somehow I have gotten the impression that I have seen that young fellow before, somewhere."

"Is that so?"

"Yes; it struck me the instant I laid eyes on him that I had seen him before, but I can't think when."

"That is strange; he is a country youth, who has lived all his life, probably, in this part of the country, and I

don't see where you could have met him—unless it might be he has been in town at some time and you have seen him here before."

"It might be that that is it," he said; "but somehow I don't think so. Say, he doesn't look like a country booby; do you think he does?"

"Well, not so much so since getting the uniform on. He did when he had on his old suit of blue homespun."

"I guess that is what makes the difference."

"You are confident that you can give him a thrashing, Gil?"

"Oh, yes; there isn't the least doubt about that."

"And you will do it?"

"At the very first opportunity."

"Good! Shake, old man!"

The two shook hands.

There was trouble ahead for Dick Slater!

## CHAPTER V.

### BUGGSLEY, THE BULLY.

When Harold Morton and Dick were back in their room, after dinner was over, the latter asked:

"Who is that big, fierce-lookin' fellow who sat across the table from me?"

"You noticed him?" remarked Morton. "That was Gilbert Buggsley. He is the roommate of Hardy, the fellow you had your difficulty with, and they are great chums and cronies."

"Ah, they are?"

"Yes. They play cards a great deal, and report has it that they play together by signs, and fleece all who are so foolish as to play with them."

"Ah, indeed. So that is the reputation they hev, is et?"

"Yes; the big fellow, Buggsley, is the worst one of the two. He is a desperado, if ever there was one, and he has killed several of the men in duels resulting from quarrels started at the card table."

"I see; he wuz detected cheatin', I suppose?"

"Yes; and on being charged with it, he, of course, became very angry, gave the lie, and the result was that he was struck, and challenged at once."

"An' he got ther best uv all ther fights?"

"Yes; he is a good shot with a pistol, and a splendid hand with the saber. No one has so far proven to be a match for him."

"Et's erbout time sumbuddy wuz gittin' after 'im, then,



"et kin hold 'im level, don't ye think?" remarked Dick, in a slow, deliberate manner.

Morton looked at the youth quickly.

"Say, don't try it, Tom!" he cried. "That fellow, Buggsley, is a demon, and as he is a friend of Hardy's, he will have it in for you and will kill you, just as like as not."

"I thort mebbly he wuz er frien' uv Hardy's; they set close tergether at ther table, ye know, an' I saw 'im lookin' at me in a funny kin' uv way, jes' ez though he wuz sizin' uv me up."

"I noticed it, too; and I think you are right. Hardy has told him about his encounter with you, and in all probability has called on him to help him secure revenge."

"Well, let 'im, if he wants ter," said Dick; "I guess I am able fur 'im."

The youth spoke quietly and confidently, but Morton shook his head.

"You don't know what a terrible fellow this Buggsley is," he protested; "I should avoid trouble with him, if I were you, and could do so."

"But thet won't be possorable, will et?"

"It will be difficult, of course, but it is not impossible."

"I don't see how et kin be done, onless I wuz ter stay cooped up indoors all ther time—an' I guess et wouldn't be possorable even then, ez he would pick er fuss with me at ther table, some day."

"I don't know but you are right; I guess that if he has made up his mind to take up the quarrel for his friend—and I think he has—there isn't much chance that you will be able to avoid a difficulty with him."

"That's whut I think, an' so I guess I shan't take no trouble ter try ter keep out uv er difficulty. I'll jes' go about my bizness, an' then ef he wants ter pick er fuss with me, I'll be ready fur 'im."

"Well, be sure that you are ready for him. Don't let him take you at a disadvantage."

"Ye may be shore I won't. I'll be redly fur 'im."

"Well, take my advice and don't let him get you into a duel if you can help it. He will murder you, if you do."

"He is a bad man, then?"

"Yes, a veritable demon."

"I s'pose thet theer wouldn't be very menmy who would shed teers ef he wuz ter be killed, er laid up fur er month er so?"

"You may be sure there would not be many; but you could not get the better of him in a duel, so don't attempt it. Indeed, even though after having seen what you did to Hardy, I know you are a good man, I cannot think that

you will be a match for Buggsley in a hand-to-hand encounter. I fear you have serious trouble ahead of you."

"Well, I'll meet et like er man, ennyway."

"I have no doubt regarding that. I know you are brave, and I am sorry that Hardy has such a man as Buggsley for a friend. I don't think he would bother you again, himself, but by deputying this demon to do the work for him, he has placed you in terrible danger—for I am confident that he has put Buggsley up to picking a fuss with you."

"I think so, myself; well, et is all right. I guess I will be able ter take keer uv myself."

"I hope so; one thing you may depend upon, and that is, that I will stand by you to the death. I am your friend, and I shall see to it that you have a fair chance, and that both of the scoundrels do not jump on you at once."

"Thank ye!" said Dick, extending his hand, which the other grasped and pressed warmly.

"He is a fine fellow, if he is a redcoat," thought Dick. "He will stand by me, and I guess I shall have a fair show, at any rate."

They talked for a while longer, and then Dick suggested that they go out and take a look at the town.

"I wanter see ther camp," the youth said; "I never saw an army before, an' et'll be er sight fur me ter look at."

"So it will; well, come along."

They walked slowly along, looking around them as they went.

Dick saw that his companion was ill at ease.

"He is afraid we may meet Hardy and his ferocious friend, Mr. Buggsley," thought the youth.

And this was the fact of the matter.

Morton felt confident that if they encountered Hardy and Buggsley, or even the latter alone, on the street, there would be trouble, as it was his belief that the ruffian would embrace the first opportunity to pick a fuss with the youth who had given his chum such a thrashing.

They walked all around, however, for an hour or more, and did not encounter either of the two, and Morton began to have hopes that they would not encounter them at all that afternoon.

He thought that if the encounter could be postponed a few days, the animosity of the two might be dulled and a fight might be avoided.

But Morton was doomed to be disappointed.

At the last moment, when they were within a block of the house in which they were quartered, they came face to face with Buggsley.

He was alone, but it was evident that he meant to make



trouble, for he paused when they were within a couple of yards of him, and stood directly in their way.

The fellow's wicked gaze was on Dick, however, and he did not seem to recognize the presence of Morton at all.

"Aha! so here is our young friend, Todd!" Buggsley exclaimed, in an extremely insolent tone of voice.

Then he placed his arms akimbo and looked Dick over, from feet to head, in the most impertinent manner.

Of course, the two had paused as soon as they were confronted by the fellow, and they stood there, waiting to see what he would do.

Dick felt like leaping forward and giving the fellow a blow between the eyes, but in order to carry out the part of a country youth, he was forced to wait till he was crowded before doing anything.

"I don't see how you ever did it," Buggsley remarked, presently, with a shake of the head. "It is a puzzle to me, I'll swear!"

"Whut's er puzzle?" asked Dick, innocently.

"Why, how you ever managed to get the better of Hardy in a fight."

"Oh, that's whut puzzles ye, is et?"

"Yes; you must have taken an unfair advantage of him, in some manner."

"Oh, no, I didn't," said Dick; "et wuz all fa'r an' squar' ez c'u'd be."

"I can bear witness to that," said Morton. "I saw the whole thing from beginning to ending, and it was fair as fair could be."

"Oh, of course you would say so!" sneered Buggsley. "Everybody knows you hate Hardy, and you would say it was fair, no matter in what way advantage might be taken of my friend."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Buggsley, but I shall have to say that I am a fair man, and that I would do nothing of the kind," said Morton, in as firm a manner as he could command, though it was evident that he stood in some fear of Buggsley; "I do not like Hardy, true, but at the same time I would not stand by and see him taken at a disadvantage, nor would I stand up for any one who might have done such a thing."

"Do you mean to say that I lie?" almost hissed Buggsley, stepping forward in a threatening manner, while a look of rage distorted his countenance. "Zounds! I'll have your heart's blood if you dare to say that."

Dick stepped quickly in between the two and waved Buggsley back.

"Hol' on! hol' on!" he said. "Jes' be keerful, mister. Don't go fur ter git yer mad up at my frien', heer. He didn't hev nothin' ter do with lickin' yer frien' Hardy."

I done et mayse'f, an' ef ye're boun' ter hev ennybudd's heart's blood, w'y et stan's ter reezon thet et orter be mine.

"Oho! you think it ought to be yours, do you?" cried Buggsley.

"That's whut I think, mister."

"Well, I guess you are right, and that suits me."

"Does et?"

"Yes."

"Glad uv et, mister; I am, b'jucks!"

"You took an unfair advantage of my friend! He told me all about it, and——"

"He lied like all git out ef he said I tuck enny unfa'r advantidge uv 'im!" broke in Dick.

"What's that! Do you dare to say that my friend lies?"

This was uttered in a very fierce tone of voice, and was accompanied by a glare that was intended to be terrifying, but it did not seem to have any effect on Dick.

"Ye bet I do mean ter say thet very thing, mister, ef he sez ez how I took advantidge uv 'im, fur I didn't."

"I know better! And I say that you took an unfair advantage of my friend!" cried the big ruffian, shaking his fist in Dick's face.

"An' I say thet ye don't know nothin' erbout et!" retorted Dick, not flinching in the least.

"What's that! What's that!"

The big ruffian could hardly believe the evidence of his own hearing.

That this seeming green, country youth should dare to talk back to him had not occurred to him, and he was not prepared for it.

"Ye heerd whut I said!" replied Dick, quietly.

"Oh, yes, I heard what you said," in a slow, deliberate manner; "but say, I reckon you don't know who I am, do you?"

"Oh, yes," was the prompt reply; "your name is Buggsley, and ye hev ther repertashun, so I hev be'n told, uv bein' a mighty bad man."

"Exactly; and I am a bad man, too, I can tell you!"

"Oh, I don't doubt et er bit, mister; ye look et!"

"What's that! Do you mean that for an insult?"

Buggsley almost howled this out, and, indeed, so loud had he been talking that already a crowd had gathered and was listening and watching with eager interest.

Among them were some who had been of the foraging party, and had seen Dick's encounter with Hardy.

They knew the youth was a good man, but they shook their heads now. Buggsley was such a terrible fellow that he had imbued all with a feeling that he could not be over-



come, and the spectators feared that the supposed country youth would not stand much chance against him.

"Well," said Dick, deliberately, in response to the other's query, "ye kin take et enny way ye like."

It was Buggsley's game to pick a quarrel with Dick, of course, and this gave him the opportunity he was seeking.

He pretended to become furious with rage.

"Why, you young scoundrel!" he cried. "I have killed men for saying less than you have just said!" and again he shook his fist under Dick's nose.

"Mebby ef they hed sed more, ye wouldn't hev hurt 'em," the youth suggested. "Ye see, they jes' sed enuff so's et showed they wuz afeerd uv ye, when ef they hed told ye jes' whut ye wuz, a big, cowardly bullying lummo, an' slapped ye in ther face, ez ye no doubt deserved ter be treated, ye wouldn't hev darst ter do ennythin' ter 'em."

The spectators, Morton included, fairly gasped for breath when they heard this, and Buggsley seemed paralyzed.

He stared at Dick for a few moments, his face growing red, and then redder, after which it turned almost black.

He was evidently on the verge of exploding, and if he had not succeeded in finding his voice at that instant, would undoubtedly have done so.

"You insolent young scoundrel!" he howled. "I'll have your heart's blood for that, as sure as my name is Buggsley!"

"I hain't got enny heart's blood ter spare," said Dick, in the coolest, most matter-of-fact manner imaginable; "an' ennyway, et's mos' too high-priced er drink fur enny-buddy ter indulge in. Ye'll hev ter git erlong without et."

"I'll give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life!" Buggsley howled. "And then I'll kill you afterward!" and the big bully shook his fist under Dick's nose, and glared like a demon.

"Ye won't do nothin' uv ther kin', ye big, cowardly ruffian!" retorted the youth, promptly, and then, as he saw the other was about to strike him, he reached out quickly and gave Buggsley a push which sent him reeling backward.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TWO ENCOUNTERS.

A wondering gasp of amazement escaped the crowd.

"He'll kill you, young fellow!"

"Look out for him!"

"He is a dangerous man!"

"He is a terror when he gets started!"

"You won't be anywhere near a match for him!"

"You had better run while you have a chance, young fellow!"

Dick looked at the last speaker and smiled.

"Oh, I don't think he is thet dangerous, is he?" he asked.

"Yes—look out!"

Buggsley had recovered his equilibrium, and was rushing forward like a mad bull.

There was the look of a demon in his glaring eyes.

There was not the least doubt in the minds of the observers but that he would do what he had said he would do.

They felt sorry for the youth who was the object of the big bully's wrath.

They were sure that he was about to be roughly handled.

Even those who had seen Dick thrash Hardy did not think him capable of holding his own against Buggsley.

They were soon to learn, however, that the fight is not always decided in favor of the bigger man.

Buggsley looked to be a third heavier than Dick, but such was really not the case.

Dick was so perfectly proportioned and so superbly built that he did not look to be nearly so large as he was, and had they been stripped and placed on the scales, Buggsley would not have outweighed him more than fifteen or twenty pounds at the very outside.

Then, too, Dick was younger, had better wind and was as live and active as a tiger.

Buggsley, while large and heavy, was not well built or correctly proportioned, and as a consequence, he was not nearly so quick and active as his youthful opponent.

Of course, he never took these things into consideration.

In all the fights in which he had been engaged, Buggsley had been pitted against men who were no more active than himself; men, indeed, who knew nothing of sparring or the science of self-defense.

They had attempted to stand up against Buggsley with the result that they had been quickly beaten to the floor, the bully's superior weight and strength making it impossible for them to offer successful resistance.

In Dick, Buggsley met a foeman of altogether a different sort.

The youth knew a trick worth two of trying to stand up and stall the big fellow off.

He did not attempt to do this at all.

Instead, he gave ground before the other.

Buggsley followed him up, striking fiercely and rapidly.

The bully knew how hard he could strike.

He felt confident that if he could land one blow, the affair would come to a sudden termination.



Indeed, Buggsley believed that if he got a good square stroke, he would be able to kill the youth.

He was certainly angry enough to do it if he could.

But that was the trouble.

He could not land the blow.

Dick was grace and skill personified.

He was as light on his feet as a dancing master.

He leaped here and there, backward, forward and sideways, and ducked, dodged and parried the blows with wonderful ease and skill.

Not a single blow could Buggsley deliver in a manner to do harm.

Out of so many, a few, of course, reached Dick, but they were glancing blows and did not hurt.

The spectators watched the affair with interest.

They had expected that the youth would be disposed of in short order.

They would not have believed that he could stand up before Buggsley for even so much as ten seconds.

To their surprise the youth had stood up before the bully for at least half a minute and had not as yet been injured in the least.

They began to be greatly interested and excited.

Perhaps the most surprised one among them was Harold Morton.

Harold was delighted as well.

The hope that his friend might be successful in defeating the ruffian sprang into life in his breast.

"Jove! that young fellow is a wonder!" he exclaimed to himself. "Can it be possible that he is other than what he seems—that he is playing a part? No matter if he is, I'll stand by him to the death; he is as fine a fellow as ever lived, or I'm no judge."

The combat still raged.

Buggsley, surprised and angered by his failure to knock his opponent senseless at once, attempted to rush matters.

He struck out more rapidly and fiercely than ever.

No matter how hard he tried, however, he could not land a solid blow on the person of his lively foe.

The unusual exertion was telling on him.

He began to puff and pant.

His blows were losing much of their force.

Striking out with all one's might in the empty air is about as tiring a thing as one can do.

Buggsley realized this when he had flailed the atmosphere fifty or sixty times with his huge fists without hitting anything.

"Why don't you stand up and fight like a man?" he gasped out in a disgusted way. "You must think this is a foot race."

Dick saw that his opponent was almost exhausted.

He felt that he could, with safety, take the offensive.

He decided to do it.

"Oh, ye want me ter stan' up an' fight like er man, do ye?" he asked.

"Yes, I do; you don't dare do it!"

"Oh, don't I?"

"No, you don't."

"Ye think so? Well, I guess I'll jes' show ye."

As he spoke Dick stopped, and, standing perfectly still, parried the other's blows.

He kept this up for a few moments and then suddenly his right arm shot out.

Crack!

The youth's fist struck Buggsley fair between the eyes, staggering him backward.

Dick was quick to follow up his advantage.

He leaped forward.

Out shot his left arm.

Thump!

Dick's fist struck Buggsley in the chest right over the heart.

It was a terrible stroke.

With such terrible force was it delivered that the action of the man's heart was temporarily stopped.

Over backward Buggsley went.

He struck the ground with a thud and lay there, for the time being, incapable of movement.

Dick stepped back, and, folding his arms, stood there looking down upon his fallen foe.

Wondering cries of amazement escaped the lips of the spectators.

"Wonderful!"

"Remarkable!"

"Marvelous!"

"I would not have believed it possible!"

"That youth is a wonder!"

"I never saw two prettier blows delivered in all my life."

"Buggsley is dazed!"

Such were a few of the exclamations given utterance to by the members of the crowd.

Harold Morton leaped forward and seizing Dick's hand, pressed it warmly.

"Good! Glorious, Tom, my boy!" he exclaimed. "By Jove! I believe you'll thrash him, after all."

"Oh, yes, he's licked now," said Dick, quietly.

"Do you really think so?" eagerly.

"Oh, yes; ther hain't no doubt erbout et. Ye see, et's this way: When he furst attacked me, he wuz fresh an' strong, yit he c'u'dn't hurt me ertall; now, ye see, he's



almost tired out, an' thet last lick I give 'im wuz right over ther heart an' ye'll fin' thet et took lots uv ther fight out uv him. Erbout one more lick in ther same spot'll put er end ter his fightin' fur a while."

Harold was delighted.

Dick's confident tone gave him confidence.

"Jove! Tom, you're a wonderful fellow!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, I dunno," replied Dick; "I guess a'most enny-buddy c'u'd lick thet big bully ef they went at et ther right way."

Harold shook his head.

It was evident that he doubted this.

Before he could say more, however, Buggsley began to stir, and the attention of all was attracted to him.

Buggsley had not been rendered unconscious by the terrible blows.

He had been dazed, however, and for a minute or two he had been unable to make a move of any kind.

There was a terrible feeling of pain in the region of his heart, and even when he did get so that he could move, he found that he felt strangely weak.

He managed to rise to a sitting posture and glared around him.

His eyes fell upon Dick and a look of rage appeared on his face.

"Curse you!" he hissed, weakly but venomously, "I'll pay you for this; I'll have your life!"

"Oh, come, come; don't make enny threats, mister," replied Dick. "Don't say thet ye'll do things thet ye know ye can't do; I sh'd think ye'd know by this time thet ye can't hurt me."

"I will hurt you! I'm not through with you yet!"

"Oh, hain't ye?"

"No."

"Well, mebbey not; ef ye hed enny sense, ye w'u'd be, but ez ye hain't got enny sense, I s'pose ye won't be satersfied till ye gets anuther dose."

Buggsley uttered a hoarse growl of rage.

As for the spectators, they stared at the youth in amazement and wonder.

He was certainly the strangest fellow they had ever seen.

He seemed to have absolutely no fear whatever of this giant ruffian.

Buggsley began struggling to regain his feet and presently succeeded.

He was unsteady on his feet, however.

He swayed backward and forward.

Dick eyed him critically.

"Ye hain't in no condition ter fight enny more, mister," he said; "ef ye'll take my advice, ye'll give et up."

A growl escaped Buggsley.

"When I want advice from you I'll let you know!" he said, fiercely.

"Oh, all right; I jes' thort I'd do ye er favor, thet's all."

"I haven't asked you for a favor!"

"No, I guess ye hevn't. Well, jes' go erhead an' do ez ye like ter; I guess I kin take keer uv myse'f, no matter whut ye do."

The spectators were beginning to believe that this was true.

Buggsley stood there for two or three minutes and gradually he became more steady on his feet.

Hardy, who was present, stepped to his side and talked to him in low tones.

"You had better give the matter up as it is," he advised; "that young scoundrel is too much for you, and if you go at him again you will only succeed in getting pounded up for your pains."

But the other would not have it.

"He can't do it!" he growled. "I held him too lightly before. I won't make the same mistake this time."

"It doesn't matter; he is too much for you in your present condition; aren't you weak?"

"No, not weak; but I don't feel so strong as I did."

"Exactly; and this young scoundrel is as strong as an ox."

"He can't be as strong as I am. If I get my hands on him, once, I will be able to crush the life out of him."

"No, you won't; that is what I thought, and I found out my mistake, very quickly. I really believe he is as strong as you, under ordinary circumstances, and now, when you are all upset, he will be much stronger than you."

"I can't believe it!"

"You will believe it when you come to close quarters with the fellow; he is a demon, I tell you."

"I'll take some of it out of him."

"No; he'll take a lot more of the strength and self-confidence out of you."

"Say, that's no way to do, to try to discourage a fellow in that style," protested Buggsley.

"I am telling you what is simply the truth, and giving you good advice for your own good, Buggsley, old man."

"Oh, I know you mean well."

"Of course I do."

"But I can't accept your advice. Why, I could never again hold up my head before these people, Rob. I would have no prestige, and any of the fellows would insult me with impunity."

"That is true, of course, but——"



"There are no 'buts' about it, Rob. I have got to thrash this young scoundrel. I must do it."

"But you can't do it, Gil, and the quicker you drop the affair, the better. Drop it now, and then challenge him, and kill him!"

"I'm going to do that, anyway; but I want satisfaction with my fists first."

"You won't get it; take my word for it."

"I'm going to try."

Hardy saw that the other was grimly determined, and realizing that it would be useless to try to dissuade him, he said:

"All right; go ahead, but mark my words, it will turn out just as I say. You will find him to be a demon in a struggle."

Hardy turned and walked back and took up his position at the edge of the crowd.

Morton had stepped to Dick's side and exchanged a few words with him.

"Hardy is advising Buggsley to give it up, don't you think?" he asked.

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Dick; "he knows how it works himself, ye know, an' I guess mebbly he is givin' his frien' some good advice cheep, fur nothin'."

"But Buggsley won't take it?"

"I don't think he will. He is one uv these heer stubborn fellers whut kin learn on'y by 'xperience, don't ye think?"

"That is the way it strikes me."

"Well, I'll try ter giv' 'im a good lesson while I'm at et; one thet'll las' 'im fur er good while."

"Look out for him, Tom. He may try some trick on you."

"I'll keep my eyes open, an' ef he tries enny trick, I reckon thet I'll be able fur ter play a little trick uv my own thet'll beat his'n."

"I hope so."

"Oh, I will! Don't ye be afeerd. I've started in ter fix this heer bully so he won't do no more damidge, an' I'm ergoin' ter fix 'im."

Hardy had stepped away from his friend, now, and Morton did the same.

All realized that the time had come for a renewal of hostilities, and all eyes were on Buggsley.

He was the aggressor, and whether or not there would be any more fighting depended on his action.

He did not long keep the spectators in doubt.

He advanced toward Dick.

He moved slowly and cautiously, however.

He did not rush in like a mad bull.

He had tried the rushing tactics, and had come out second best.

He would not make that mistake again.

He was confident that if he could succeed in getting hold of Dick, he would have no difficulty in overpowering him.

He was reckoning on his size and supposed superior strength.

True, Hardy had warned him that Dick was very strong, but he did not believe the youth could possibly be so strong as himself, even though he was still somewhat tired as a result of his exertions, and had been weakened by the terrible blows administered by the youth.

"Oh, I'll choke the life out of the young scoundrel!" he said to himself as he advanced. "I'll do it, even though I am surrounded by men who would like to see me get the worst of it, and if they try to interfere, it won't be good for them!"

Mr. Buggsley was certainly counting his chickens before they were hatched.

He was soon to learn that it is extremely easy to decide what a person is going to do, but often extremely difficult to do it.

Dick Slater would have to be reckoned with, in this affair.

When Buggsley was within a couple of yards of him, Dick made a restraining gesture.

"Ye'd better take ther advice uv yer frien', an' give et up, mister," he said; "I don't wanter hurt ye enny more, but ef ye push me to et, I guess I will do et."

This, as Dick had shrewdly calculated, made Buggsley furiously angry.

His face grew black with rage, and it was with difficulty that he restrained himself from leaping upon the youth.

Dick knew what the fellow intended trying to do, as well as though Buggsley had proclaimed it aloud, and wishing to make sure of being enabled to get his hold when the clash came, he thought it no sin to make this easier by angering the fellow and causing him to lose his head.

Dick was a splendid general.

"Curse you!" hissed Buggsley. "I'll make you wish ye had never been born!"

Dick laughed in a tantalizing fashion.

"Oh, ye're on'y talkin' ter heer yerself, mister!" he said, jeeringly.

This was more than Buggsley could endure.

He leaped forward, giving utterance to a roar of anger as he did so, and struck a fierce blow at the youth's face.

He thought that he might succeed in landing the blow, and he was confident that if he did succeed, the fight would be ended.



Dick was on the lookout, however, and ducking with the quickness of a flash of lightning, he darted under the other's arm, and danced up behind him.

So quickly was this done, and with such grace and ease that the crowd gave utterance to exclamations of amazement.

"Jove! the boy's all right!"

"He certainly is!"

"He is a wonder, sure enough!"

"He is as quick as a flash of lightning!"

Buggsley, giving utterance to a roar of anger, whirled and thought to grab the youth.

He did not do it, however.

Dick was ready, and as the fellow turned toward him, out shot the youth's right fist.

It landed between the bully's eyes with a whip-like crack.

Buggsley threw up his hands and staggered back.

This left his chest exposed.

Then out shot Dick's terrible left fist.

Thump!

The fist struck Buggsley right at the pit of the stomach.

It was a terrible stroke.

It was almost equal to the stroke of a pile-driver.

Down went Buggsley, with a thump and a grunt of pain.

He struck flat on his back, but writhed to a sitting posture and clasped his stomach in his hands.

"Oh-h-h-h-h-hh! Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!" he groaned.

It was a long-drawn-out groan that was terrible to hear.

Buggsley was as white as a sheet.

That he was in terrible agony was evident.

The spectators stared first at him, and then at Dick, with wondering eyes.

A low, muttered curse escaped the lips of Hardy.

"But I told him how it would be," he said to himself.

"I knew it would turn out that way. That young fellow is a demon."

Harold Morton was delighted.

"Good for you, Tom!" he said. "That fellow has been needing a lesson for a long time, and now I guess he has got one that will last him a while."

"You didn't nor couldn't give it to him!" almost hissed Hardy.

"Perhaps not," was the prompt reply; "but I can and will give you a similar lesson, if you say the word."

There was such menace in the young soldier's tone that Hardy was awed.

He was not a very brave fellow, anyway, and so he slunk back, muttering something unintelligible.

Dick stood with folded arms, looking down upon his fallen foe.

Buggsley writhed and groaned for perhaps three or four minutes, and then became quiet, though it was evident from the look on his face that he was still suffering considerable pain.

Hardy now stepped forward, and asked Buggsley how he felt.

"Oh, I feel like I was worth about as much as a dead man, and no more!" was the growling reply, accompanied by grimaces.

"Do you want any help?"

"Yes; help me to my feet."

Hardy stooped and seized his friend by the arm, and assisted the fellow to his feet.

"Can you walk without assistance?" Hardy asked.

"I might, but I don't care about trying the experiment; keep hold of my arm, Hardy."

"All right; are you ready?"

"Wait just a minute. I want to say a word to this young scoundrel;" and he nodded toward Dick.

"Well, whut is et thet ye want say ter me, ye ole scoundrel?" asked Dick, calmly.

He was determined that the fellow should not get ahead of him in the applying of epithets or in any other way.

Buggsley's face grew dark.

He uttered a growl, but it was useless for him to say anything. He had been whipped, and knew it.

"This is what I wish to say: That you are not through with me yet!"

"Oh, hain't I?" asked Dick.

"No; you are not!"

"Then ye hain't through with me?"

"No. You will hear from me again, and soon, too. I shall not rest until I have washed out this defeat in your life-blood!"

Dick elevated his eyebrows.

He did not seem at all frightened, however.

"Say, ye mus' be a kin' uv er bloodthirsty sort uv feller, hain't ye?" he remarked, coolly.

"You will see!"

"All right; I guess ye're right erbout thet. I intend ter see whutever is goin' on, ef I'm ennywhurs aroun'. An' since ye hev hed yer little say, I will hev mine. Ef ye wants ennythin' more outer me, ye kin hev et at enny time, in enny way an' at enny place. An' thet's ther kin' uv er feller I be!"

"All right; you'll hear from me!"

Then Buggsley walked staggeringly away, leaning heavily on the arm of his friend.



"I guess theer goes erbout ez big er pair uv rascals ez kin be skeered up ennywhurs aroun' heer!" remarked Dick, as he looked after the two.

"There isn't any doubt regarding that!" agreed Harold Morton.

"You will have to look out for Buggsley," warned one of the spectators; "he is a fire-eater, and will, no doubt, challenge you to a duel."

"Well, I'm sumthin' uv er fire-eeter myself," said Dick, calmly; "an' ef thet big feller hain't satersfied yit, w'y, I guess I kin satersfy 'im."

"What! You don't mean to say that you have ever fought a duel?" exclaimed Harold, in astonishment.

Dick nodded.

"Yes, I do mean ter say thet very thing," he said, with great gravity; "ye see, et wuz this way: Me'n Bill Perkins both wuz shin' up ter ther same gal, an' ez we couldn't both hev her, we ergreed ter fight er duel."

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed Morton, while the spectators listened eagerly to what Dick was saying. "How did the duel come out?"

"Oh, I laid Bill up with er bullet in his lungs, an' ther gal wuz so mad she wouldn't hev nothin' more ter do with me. She went and he'ped nuss 'im back ter life, an' thet's ther reezon I want ter jine ther army."

"Oh, that was it, eh?" said Harold.

"Yes, thet was et."

"Well, that was rather rough on you, I should say."

"Yes, but I'll git over et, I guess, an' ef this heer big feller wants ter fight er duel with me, I'll fight him."

"Well, I hope he won't challenge you," said Harold. "He is a dangerous man, and I would rather you would not be called upon to meet him."

"Oh, well, I hain't er hankerin' about et, but ef he wants ter fight me, I'll be ready fur him."

The two now walked up the street to the house in which they were quartered, and, entering, made their way to their room.

They took seats and then for a few moments Morton gazed searchingly into the eyes of his companion.

There was a puzzled look on his face.

"Tom," he said, abruptly, "you are a strange fellow and I don't know what to make of you."

## CHAPTER VII.

### BUGGSLEY IS DEFEATED.

Dick gazed the other in the eyes, unflinchingly.

He knew what was in the mind of the other.

Morton was puzzled by the fact that he (Dick), while seemingly a simple country youth, was such a wonderful fighter.

Naturally Morton could not understand the affair.

Not a muscle of Dick's face changed, however.

He looked the innocent country youth to the life.

"W'y don' ye know whut ter make uv me?" he asked.

"It's simple enough. You are, seemingly, a simple country youth, yet you are an expert sparrer and a wonder in more ways than one. I don't understand it."

"Oh, I guess theer hain't nothin' so very strange erbout et," Dick remarked.

Morton shook his head.

"It seems so to me," he said; "but no matter, I have taken a liking to you, and will stand by you through thick and thin. I am your friend, and you may depend upon it."

"Thank ye, Harold!" said Dick.

The young men had been in their room perhaps an hour when there came a knock on the door.

"Come in!" called out Harold.

The door opened, and Robert Hardy entered.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," he said, with elaborate politeness, bowing low.

The two returned the salutation with studied politeness.

"Be seated," invited Morton.

"It is not necessary," was the reply; "I have come on business, and my time here will be brief. To come to the point, I come in behalf of Mr. Buggsley, who demands the satisfaction at your hands due one gentleman from another;" and he bowed to Dick.

"I s'pose thet means thet yer frien' hain't satersfied, an' is hankerin' fur ernother try et me?" Dick remarked, coolly.

"That is it, exactly; he challenges you to a duel, in other words."

"Well, he's er bigger hog nor I thort, but ef he hain't satersfied, I'm perfectly willin' ter giv' 'im satersfaction. I s'pose ye'll act fur me in this heer affair?" to Harold.

"Yes, indeed!" replied Harold, and then he addressed Hardy.

"You understand, of course, that as the challenged party my principal has the choice of weapons?"

The other nodded.

"Of course, I understand that," he replied, sneeringly; "I have acted for my friend in half a dozen affairs of this kind, and understand all about how they should be conducted. I may add that I have no doubt I shall act in half a dozen more, also."

Dick looked the fellow straight in the eyes and a peculiar glint came into his own orbs, as he said, quietly:

"D'ye reely think so?"



"I do!" was the decided reply. "My principal will kill you, just as sure as that you appear on the field and confront him."

"That remains to be seen," said Harold Morton, coolly.

"Ef he is ez good a fighter ez ye air a bragger, then he mus' be dang'rous, fur shore!" said Dick, coolly.

Hardy flushed, angrily.

He started to say something, but changed his mind and refrained.

Instead, he turned toward Harold, and said:

"What is your choice of weapons?"

Morton turned an inquiring look upon Dick.

The youth shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, et don't matter ertall," he said, carelessly; "pistils, sabers, muskets, cannon—et's all ther same ter me. I hed jes' ez leeve kill ther big brute with one weepin ez ther other."

Again Hardy flushed with anger, while Morton cast a wondering glance upon his strange friend.

"I guess some one else is doing the bragging now!" Hardy said, sarcastically.

Dick shook his head.

"Oh, no," he dissented; "I am on'y makin' er plain statement uv fack, thet's all."

"How will pistols at ten paces do?" asked Harold.

Dick nodded.

"Fine!" he said. "I kin shoot ther hammer off'n er pistil at ten paces, an' I won't hev enny trubble puttin' er bullet inter Mister Buggsley's eye at thet distance."

Again Hardy flushed, angrily, and was forced to bite his lip to keep from saying something which might have gotten him into trouble.

"Pistols, at ten paces, will suit my principal," he said; "and for your information, young fellow," to Dick, "I will say that at that distance my friend is a dead shot."

"He'll be er dead shooter after ther furst exchange uv shots," said Dick, coolly. "Thet is, if I make up my min' ter kill 'im," he added, reflectively. "Whut d'ye think erbout et, Harold? Would ye kill 'im, ef ye wuz me, er not?" and the youth, looked inquiringly at his friend.

Morton hardly knew what to make of his friend.

There was a peculiar, puzzled expression in his eyes as he looked at Dick.

He shook his head and replied:

"I would not like to say, Tom. Just use your own judgment in regard to the matter."

"And now, about the place?" remarked Hardy.

"It is immaterial where the encounter takes place," replied Morton; "any quiet place will suit us."

"There is a nice, quiet place up the river a mile. It is

a little glade in the timber, beside the stream. There have been several meetings held there; how will that do?"

"That will suit us. I have been there."

"Very good; and the time of the meeting?"

Harold looked at Dick.

"Enny time will suit me," the youth said; "ther sooner, ther better, so fur ez I am concerned."

"Well, say to-morrow morning at seven o'clock; how will that do?" with a glance at Hardy.

"That will suit us, first rate," was Hardy's reply.

"Very good; consider the matter settled then."

"Very well; good afternoon, gentlemen!" and Hardy bowed himself out.

The two bowed and said good afternoon, and when Hardy had gone, Morton turned toward his companion.

"Well, Tom, you're in for it, I guess," he remarked, soberly.

"Looks like it," was the careless reply.

"You do not seem much disturbed by the prospect."

Dick laughed.

"No, I hain't disturbed," he replied; "why should I be?"

"Well, Buggsley is a dangerous man; he is a splendid shot with the pistol."

"So'm I; ef I wanter, I kin shoot his pistol outer his han's and he won't git no chance ter hurt me ertall."

An eager light glowed in Morton's eyes.

"Can you do that, sure enough?" he asked.

"Uv course I kin."

"Then you weren't boasting when you said what you did to Hardy?"

"No, I meant et."

"I thought you were saying that just to worry him, and, if possible, get Buggsley a little bit frightened."

"Well, I did mean et ter hev thet effect, but at ther same time I kin shoot jes' ez I said I c'u'd."

"I'm deucedly glad to hear it; well, whatever you do, Tom, don't throw away any chances to-morrow morning; down Buggsley if you can. If you don't down him, he'll down you."

"Oh, I'll down him all right; I kinder hate ter kill him, though. Whut do ye think erbout et?"

"Oh, do as you like about that; be sure and give him a serious wound, though."

"I'll do thet; I don't think he'll be in er condition ter continner ther fight after ther furst fire."

They talked on till supper-time, and then went down to the evening meal.

The fact that Dick had been challenged had become known to all, and each and every one present announced his intention of seeing the encounter.



Dick and Harold Morton retired early that evening and were up early next morning.

Leaving the house, they made their way down to the river.

Turning to the left, they made their way along the bank of the stream.

There was a path through the woods and a walk of fifteen minutes brought them out into a little clearing.

Buggsley and Hardy were already on the ground.

Nearly a score of young soldiers were there also.

Dick and Harry approached the group standing near the centre of the glade and exchanged greetings with the members.

No time was lost in getting ready for business.

Morton and Hardy, the seconds, loaded the pistols and then each selected one for his principal.

Then they stepped off the distance—ten paces.

The spectators watched proceedings with interest.

They took especial care to observe the demeanor of the principals.

Buggsley, dark-faced, fierce and sullen-looking, paced backward and forward at a little distance.

He seemed to be nervous.

Dick, on the other hand, stood quietly in his tracks, his arms folded, a calm, unconcerned look on his face.

To judge by his looks one would think that he had no fear regarding the result of the approaching contest.

Was his seeming confidence born of a knowledge of what he was capable of doing or was it born of ignorance?

This was the question which the spectators asked themselves.

The majority of them hoped it was the former—for although Dick was almost a stranger to them, they wished that he might win.

Few, indeed, were there among the soldiers who liked Buggsley.

A man was chosen from among the spectators to act as master of ceremonies and give the word, and when all the arrangements had been completed, the principals took their places.

Pistol in hand, the combatants faced each other.

Buggsley glared at Dick in a most ferocious manner.

"Now I have you where I want you!" the ruffian cried, venomously. "Curse you, I'm going to kill you!"

If Buggsley thought to frighten Dick, he made a great mistake.

It would take a great deal more than words or looks to frighten the youth.

Dick merely grinned in an aggravating manner.

"Sho! ye don't say!" he remarked, sarcastically. "Et's

reel kind of yer ter tell me; I won't be tuk so by surprise, ye know, when et happens."

A hoarse growl of rage escaped Buggsley.

"I guess you think I don't mean what I say?" he growled.

"Perhaps you think I won't dare kill you!"

"Oh, I think ye'll kill me ef ye kin—but kin ye, thet's ther question?"

"You'll find that I not only can, but will!"

"I'll bet ye ennything ye wanter thet ye won't!"

Dick was perfectly calm and self-possessed.

This very fact went far to anger his opponent.

Then, too, Buggsley saw that the majority of the spectators were enjoying the exchange of words, and that they favored the strange youth.

"I do not care to wager on the result of this affair," he said, loftily.

"No?" remarked Dick. "W'y, I thort ye wuz er gambler, an' would bet on ennythin'."

Another growl escaped Buggsley.

He was not getting the better of the youth, and was rapidly losing his temper.

He turned a savage face toward the master of ceremonies.

"Let's not fool away any more time," he cried; "give the word as soon as possible."

"Hold on!" cried Dick. "Wait er minnet."

"What is the trouble?" asked the man who was to give the word. "Aren't you ready?"

"Not quite; wait er minnet. I hain't made up my min' yit whether ter kill 'im er on'y cripple 'im fur life!"

This was said in such a matter-of-fact way that the crowd stared.

What manner of youth was this, anyway? they asked themselves.

A hoarse growl of rage escaped Buggsley.

"Oh, give the word, quick!" he cried. "I am eager to kill this insolent young hound!"

Then Dick nodded his head vigorously.

"All right; give ther word ez soon ez ye like," he called out, "I've made up my min' whut ter do."

Hardy, who stood near his principal, and who saw that his man was becoming very much excited and angry, kept telling him to keep cool.

"He is just doing that to make you mad, and make your aim uncertain," he said, in a low voice. "Don't let him work that kind of a trick."

But the "trick" had already been worked.

Buggsley's nerves were all a-shake, he was so angry, and it was evident that he would be unable to do himself justice in the contest at hand.



Had Buggsley not been such a scoundrel, Dick would have scorned to work him up and make him nervous; as it was, however, he felt justified in doing as he had done. Buggsley had attempted to play the same trick on Dick, and it had reacted on himself.

"Give the word!" cried the bully, hoarsely. "Give it at once!"

"Ready?" called out the master of ceremonies.

"Ready!" replied both contestants in the same breath. Up came the pistols to the level.

"Take aim!"

The two took careful aim.

The spectators stared with eager eyes.

Dick's hand seemed to be as steady as a rock, but Buggsley's arm trembled slightly, and the muzzle of his pistol wavered and wobbled.

The keen eyes of the spectators noted this.

"I believe the young fellow is going to get the better of this affair!" said one, in a low tone.

"It looks that way," was the reply.

There was no time for more words.

"Fire!"

The master of ceremonies uttered the word, quickly and sharply.

Instantly there were two reports, one coming just an instant ahead of the other.

Buggsley gave utterance to a gurgling cry of pain and fell forward upon his face.

Dick had fired first and had inflicted a serious wound upon his antagonist.

The bullet from Dick's pistol had struck the big fellow in the right shoulder.

The shock had destroyed Buggsley's aim, and the bullet from his weapon went two feet to one side of the youth.

A long-drawn-out "Ah-h-h-h-h!" escaped the crowd.

They had hoped that this would be the result, but such was the reputation of Buggsley as a successful duelist, they had been afraid the youth would fall a victim as those who had gone before him had done.

But such had not been the case.

The duelist had been the victim.

The pitcher had gone once too often to the well.

There was a surgeon present, and he hastened to where the wounded man lay.

The spectators followed.

"Don't crowd me, gentlemen," the surgeon said; "give me room, and the wounded man air."

All awaited eagerly while the surgeon made an examination of the wound.

"It is not necessarily fatal," was his verdict; "but it is

an ugly wound, gentlemen, and Mr. Buggsley will not engage in another affair of this kind very soon."

A litter had been brought along, and the wounded man was placed on this and carried back to the town.

Dick received congratulations from the majority of those who had witnessed the duel, and he received the praise very modestly.

"Jove! you are a hero, Tom!" exclaimed Harold, when they were in their room. "I am proud of you! You don't know how glad I am that you came out victor, and gave that scoundrel a severe wound!"

"I'm glad fur ther reezon thet ez I unnerstan' et, he wuz er scoundrel an' dangerous man," said Dick, quietly; "an' I allers like ter put er spoke in ther wheels uv sich fellers whenever I git er chance. Ef this puts er stop to his bullyin' an' runnin' over ther rest uv ther fellers, I'll be satersfied."

"Well, you may rest satisfied, then, for this will put an end to it, without a doubt."

Dick was not sorry the affair had come up, since it had made him friends among the redcoats, and he would be just that much less likely to be suspected of being a spy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SUMMONED BY THE BRITISH COMMANDER.

Dick was the observed of all observers, that day, when he walked about the town in company with Harold.

Those who knew about the duel pointed Dick out to others who had heard of the affair, but had not as yet seen the youth who had given Buggsley a good thrashing and then a severe wound in a duel.

All seemed desirous of making his acquaintance, and every one who did so, congratulated him.

Harold was proud of the fact that Dick was his roommate and chum.

It gave him considerable prestige, and as his rival, Robert Hardy, was the friend and chum of Buggsley, he considered that he had practically triumphed over Hardy.

Dick, under pretense of wishing to acquire information of the life of a soldier, asked innumerable questions, and Harold was glad to answer them.

In this way the youth learned much that might prove to be of benefit later on.

Next day, just after dinner, an orderly came and told Harold he was wanted at headquarters.

He went at once, and when he returned, he looked sober.



So Dick thought, at any rate, and a suspicion struck him that Harold's call to headquarters might have something to do with him.

He decided to question his roommate at once.

"Well, Harold, whut did they want with ye?" he asked, in a careless, off-hand manner.

Harold started and looked somewhat ill at ease.

"With me?" he remarked, as if wishing to kill time and give himself time to think.

"Yes, they sent fur ye ter come ter headquarters, didn't they?"

"Ye-es."

"Did they want ye ter go on some kin' uv er experdishun, Harold?" asked Dick, with simulated eagerness. "'Cause if they did, I'd like ter go erlong uv ye. I'd like ter git er taste uv fightin'."

Harold looked at Dick in a searching manner.

He seemed to be debating some question.

It was a hard one to decide, evidently, judging by the look on his face.

Presently he shook his head.

"No, they didn't want me to go on an expedition," he replied.

"No?" and Dick simulated disappointment.

"No; they wished to ask me some questions."

"Oh!" in a tone which betokened entire absence of interest.

Harold still looked earnestly and searchingly at Dick.

The youth felt sure that the call to headquarters had something to do with him, but he did not wish to ask questions, if he could get Harold to explain without.

He was keeping close watch on his companion's face without seeming to do so.

Suddenly he saw Harold's face brighten.

A determined look came over it.

"He has made up his mind to tell me!" thought Dick.

"Good! I'm glad of that."

Dick was right.

"Say, Tom, what do you suppose the commander asked me?" Harold queried, abruptly.

"I dunno; whut?"

Dick answered promptly, and with the proper show of surprise.

"He asked me a lot of questions about you!"

Dick elevated his eyebrows.

"Erbout me?"

"Yes, about you."

Dick shook his head, slowly.

"I don' see whut he could be axin' erbout me," he said.

Harold was silent a few moments.

"I've a good mind to tell you what he asked me," he said, presently.

"W'y, yes, of course, Harold. W'y not?"

Dick played the part of an innocent and surprised person to perfection.

"Well, I will do it. He asked me who you were, and all about you."

Dick looked puzzled.

"Well, thet wuzn't hard fur ye ter answer, wuz et?" he asked.

"Oh, no; not particularly. That is to say, I told him what you said your name was, and where you said you came from."

"Thet wuz all right; an' I s'pose he wuz satersfied, then?"

Harold hesitated.

"Well, I can't say that he was satisfied," he replied.

"No?"

"No."

"W'y wuzn't he?"

Harold was silent for a few moments, and then he said:

"I guess I might as well tell you why he wasn't satisfied."

Dick nodded.

"Of course; go erhead."

"Well, I will do so; the commander is suspicious that you are not what you make yourself out to be!"

Dick assumed a look of blank amazement.

"Whut! Me not whut I make myself out ter be?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; that is what he suspects."

"But w'y sh'd he suspek thet?"

"Well, the fact that you are such a wonderful fighter, both with your fists and in a duel, has made him suspicious."

"I don' see w'y thet sh'd make 'im suspishus."

"It is very simple; he thinks that a simply country youth as you make yourself out to be could not know how to fight like you do."

"Oh, thet is whut makes 'im think thet way?"

"Yes; and to tell the truth, Tom, I have wondered, myself, at your wonderful fighting abilities, and your coolness when in danger."

"Is thet so?"

"Yes; and others of the boys have mentioned it, too."

Dick shook his head.

"No, I kain't see et," he dissented; "but ef ye thet settles et; an' I s'pose I'll hev ter stan' whut start, trubble comes outer et."

Harold nodded.

red at



"And I'm afraid that trouble is going to come out of it, too, Tom," he said, soberly.

"D'ye think so?"

"Yes."

"Whut makes ye think so?"

"For the reason that the commander is going to send for you in a few minutes and question you."

"Oh, he is!"

"Yes; but whatever you do, Tom, if you love me, don't let on that I told you that you were suspected of being other than what you seem to be."

"I won't, Harold. But ef I wuz other than whut I claim ter be, whut would I be?"

Harold looked sharply at his companion.

"Don't you know?" he asked.

Dick shook his head.

"W'y, no," he replied.

"Then I'll tell you: You would in all probability be a spy!"

Harold was watching Dick keenly as he said this.

But he was dealing with a veteran at this sort of work

Dick was too old a hand to betray himself by expression of surprise.

"A spy?" he queried, elevating his eyebrows.

"Yes; a rebel spy."

Dick's face lightened up.

"Oh, I know whut ye mean, now!" he exclaimed. "So ther commander suspects thet I might be er rebel spy?"

"Yes."

"Well, well! I never 'xpeckted ter be took fur er rebel spy!" said Dick, slowly and deliberately.

Harold looked at his companion in an earnest and searching manner.

He did not say anything for perhaps a minute, and then he spoke.

"Tom," he said, earnestly, "I have taken a great liking to you, be you what you may, and I am going to give you bit of advice."

"Go erhead," said Dick; "I'll be much obliged ter ye."

"All right; be very careful when the commander begins question you. Answer his questions promptly, and whatever you do, don't make him angry; he is a fierce man when he gets mad."

"All right; I'll remember whut ye hev said, Harold."

"Do so; it will be worth your while."

"En, d'ye think, will he send fur me?"

"Ight away, I think."

things! that is bad, hain't et! Et don't give a feller have er think."

"I, keep cool, and be careful."

"I'll try ter; but et'll be purty hard, when I know ez how I'm s'pected uv bein' er rebel spy."

The two conversed a few minutes longer, and then footsteps were heard advancing along the hall outside.

"There comes the orderly for you now, Tom!" whispered Harold. "Remember, be careful, old man."

"I will."

There came a knock on the door at this instant.

"Come in!" called out Harold.

The door opened.

An orderly stood there.

"Is Thomas Todd here?" he asked.

"Thet's me," said Dick, nodding.

"You are wanted at headquarters," the orderly said.

"Right erway?"

"Yes, at once."

"Shell I go along uv ye?"

"Yes, those were the orders."

"All right; lead ther way, mister."

The orderly seemed surprised, and looked at Dick, curiously.

He turned, at once, however.

"Come," he said, and walked out of the room and along the hall.

Dick followed, and gave Harold a reassuring look and smile as he left the room.

Dick realized that he was in considerable danger.

He was thinking rapidly as he walked along at the heels of the orderly.

Unless he could throw dust in the eyes of the commander, and make him think that his suspicions were unfounded, Dick would probably go straight from the commander's headquarters to the guard-house.

This would not be pleasant, by any means.

Dick decided to put on a bold front.

Indeed, that was the only thing he could do.

He wished that he had thought to ask Harold who the commander was.

He knew it was not Cornwallis, for that gentleman was in New York with General Howe, the commander-in-chief.

Had not Dick been aware of this fact, he would not have ventured into the town, as Cornwallis was personally acquainted with him, and would have recognized him at once.

Dick decided to ask the orderly.

"Whut's ther name uv ther commander uv ther army?" he asked.

"General Percy is in command, during the absence of General Cornwallis," was the reply.

"Thank ye," he said.



"Percy, eh?" he mused. "I have heard of him, but have never met him, so I don't think he will be able to recognize me. I guess that if I maintain a bold front, and insist that I am Tom Todd, and no one else, I shall come out all right. That is the game I shall play, at any rate."

A walk of a few minutes took them to the building occupied as headquarters.

Dick was ushered into the room occupied by General Percy.

## CHAPTER IX.

### QUESTIONED.

Dick gave a quick, searching glance around the room.

There were two other officers present, but the youth did not remember to have ever seen them, so he felt pretty confident that they had never seen him before.

General Percy was likewise a stranger to Dick.

When the orderly ushered Dick into the room and announced, "Thomas Todd," the officers turned their gaze on the youth.

They looked at Dick, searchingly.

It was evident that they were curious regarding him.

Dick bore the scrutiny unflinchingly.

He had been in too many tight places in the time he had been in the patriot army to be greatly disconcerted, even under such circumstances as the present.

"What is your name, sir?" asked General Percy, with a frown.

His tone was severe.

"Tom Todd, sir," was Dick's reply.

"Ah! Thomas Todd, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"H'm! Where do you live?"

"Erbout fifteen miles frum heer, sir."

"In which direction?"

"Ter ther west, sir."

"To the west, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"How came you to join the British army?"

"Well, ye see, sir, I've be'n a-wantin' ter jine ther army all erlong."

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why haven't you joined it sooner, then?"

"Well, ye see, et wuz this erway: Dad an' mam didn't want me ter jine."

"So that was the reason?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have they changed their minds recently, then?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, sir."

"Then why have you joined?"

"Well," said Dick, slowly, "I made up my min' ter jine all uv er sudden."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"How was that?"

"Well, ye see, I wuz out er huntin' our ole cow, whut hed strayed erway, an' I happened ter come onter er lot uv ther soldiers camped by ther river, an' I jes' made up my min' thet thet wuz my chance, an' so I jined."

"And you didn't stop to think what your parents would think about the matter?"

Dick shook his head.

"I guess I'll hev ter acknowlerdge thet I didn't, mister," he replied.

"Well," in a somewhat severe tone, "do you think that is right?"

Dick shook his head.

"I guess thet when ye come right down ter et, I didn't treet 'em jis' right," he admitted.

He stared the youth straight in the eyes, and seemed to be trying to read his very soul.

Dick met the gaze unflinchingly.

The youth knew what was coming, and braced himself to meet it.

Suddenly the general spoke.

"Young man," he said, slowly and deliberately, "do you know what I think?"

Dick shook his head, and a well-simulated look of wonder appeared on his face.

"No, sir," he replied; "I hevn't enny idee whut ye think."

"No? Well, I'll tell you what I think."

The general paused, and almost glared at Dick for a few moments, but, needless to say, without effect, for the only look that was on Dick's face was one of surprise and amazement, and this look was simulated.

"I believe you are a spy!"

General Percy spoke quickly, sharply and sternly.

It was evidently his intention to take the youth entirely by surprise and overwhelm him.

But Dick was prepared for this, and he did not start, or show any signs of uneasiness.

The general and the other two officers as well stared at Dick, eagerly and searchingly.



That they were surprised and disappointed, when the youth betrayed no signs of alarm, was evident.

They looked at each other in a wondering and questioning manner.

It was as much as to ask each other what they thought of the affair.

"Ye think I am er spy?" remarked Dick, in a tone which betrayed only surprise and wonderment.

"That is what I believe!"

Dick shook his head slowly.

"I kain't think whut would make ye think thet, mister," he said.

"Do you mean that you deny being a spy?"

General Percy's tone was threatening.

Dick nodded.

"Thet is jest whut I do mean ter say, mister!"

Dick's voice was not defiant, but simply earnest and determined.

"You deny it, eh?"

"Yes, sir; an' I kain't think w'y ye sh'd hev picked onter me ez bein' er spy."

"You can't think why I should have done this, eh?"

"No, sir. What hev I done thet ye sh'd think I am er spy?"

"Well, for one thing, you say you are a country boy, yet as I understand it, you are a wonderful fighter and wrestler—are so expert, in fact, that you succeeded in thrashing two of the best men in the British army."

Dick nodded.

"I guess thet is er fack," he acknowledged; "at enny rate, thet is whut ther men tell me."

"Exactly; and that is what made me suspicious. No country youth could possibly fight as you have done."

Dick nodded his head.

"I'm er country youth, mister, an' I fought thet erway," he said, quietly.

"And, then, I hear that you fought a duel with one of the most dangerous men in the entire British army, and desperately wounded the man; is that true?"

"I s'pose et is," Dick admitted.

"Well, don't you think that is enough to arouse the suspicions of any one?"

"I don' see w'y et should."

"You don't?"

"No, sir."

"It is very simple, it seems to me. It is a very unusual thing for a country youth to show such prestige as you have shown."

"Not in Ameriky, mister."

General Percy started and looked at Dick, keenly and searchingly.

Then he glanced at the other officers, who returned the glance with interest.

"Then you think that the Americans are great people?"

"Well, mos' uv ther young fellers knows how ter fight, an' shoot, an' ever'thin' like thet. Ye see, they learns mighty early."

"I see; well, you are quite a philosopher, aren't you?"

"I dunno whut er filosophur is, mister."

"Well, you at least know what a spy is, do you not?"

Dick pondered a few moments.

"Well, I dunno fur shore," he said, slowly; "but I think I knows whut er spy is, tho' I never seen one ez I knows on."

"I suppose you haven't such a thing as a mirror?" asked the general, with a laugh, which was echoed by the other officers.

Dick pretended that he did not understand what the officer meant.

He shook his head.

"No, I hain't got no mirror," he replied.

"I meant that if you had a mirror, and would look at yourself in it, you would see a spy!" exclaimed the general.

Dick assumed a look of innocence and amazement.

"Me er spy?" he exclaimed. "I guess ye air mighty bad mistook, mister, ef so be's ye think thet!"

The general eyed Dick sharply.

Dick met the gaze unflinchingly.

"Then you say you are not a spy," the general remarked, presently.

"Thet is jest whut I do say, mister; I hain't no spy."

The general pondered a few moments.

He seemed puzzled.

It was evident that he hardly knew what to do.

Presently he indicated a chair at the farther side of the room.

"Be seated," he ordered.

Dick crossed the room and took the seat indicated.

General Percy called the two officers to his side and the three talked together in whispers for a few moments.

Dick knew what the whispering was about as well as if he had heard what they were saying.

The three were discussing the situation and trying to make up their minds what should be done with the youth.

It was impossible to forecast what decision they would come to, but Dick hoped it would be favorable to him.

As may be supposed, he was on the anxious seat.

Presently the three ceased whispering and the general turned to Dick.

"You may go—for the present," he said; "if you really



are loyal to the king, all will be well with you, but if you are false to the king, if you are a rebel spy, the fact will soon be learned and then your career will come to a sudden end; I will have you hanged, as sure as my name is Percy!"

"Oh, I hain't no spy," said Dick; "ye won't hev no call ter hang me."

Then Dick saluted and withdrew.

"That was a close call," thought Dick, as he left headquarters. "I thought for a while that I would be sent to the guard-house and held there a prisoner until they could satisfy themselves regarding me; I'll have to be very careful, learn all I can as quickly as possible and then get away from here. I am in great danger every day that I remain here."

## CHAPTER X.

### SPREADING THE NET.

When Dick returned to his room, Harold Morton questioned him eagerly.

Dick told his companion all that had passed between himself and General Percy.

Harold was delighted to learn that his friend had passed the examination successfully.

"Jove! I thought that I was going to lose you, Tom, old fellow," he said.

"And thet would hev been turrible, hey?" remarked Dick with a smile.

"Yes, indeed, for I'll tell you frankly that I have taken a great liking to you, old fellow."

Dick extended his hand which the other grasped.

The two shook hands, heartily.

"I kin return ther compliment, Harold," replied Dick, "fur I kin say thet I like ye, too."

And this was true.

Dick had taken a great liking to Harold Morton.

Dick conducted himself with great circumspection during the next two or three days.

On the third day he learned that an expedition consisting of two companies under command of two captains was to make its way northward toward Morristown for the purpose of reconnoitring the patriot stronghold.

Dick thought that this would be an opportunity to get in a good stroke for Liberty's cause.

"I'll slip away to-night," he thought, "and will return to Morristown with the news; I will get General Washington to grant me permission to take my 'Liberty Boys' and two or three other companies and we will spread a net

for the redcoats. As they will not be looking for this should be able to catch them without any difficulty."

Dick waited impatiently for night to come.

He cudgeled his brain all evening to conjure up a story to tell his roommate, Harold Morton, to account for his departure.

A happy thought struck him.

He would tell Harold that he was going to make a trip to his home to see his folks and let them know what had become of him.

When they had returned to their room after supper, Dick told his roommate this story.

Harold thought it was a good idea, and encouraged Dick in it.

As soon as it was dark, Dick left the room and the house.

He walked down the street and was soon out of the town.

During the time that he had been in New Brunswick he had learned where all the sentinels were posted.

Owing to this fact he had no trouble in getting out of the town without being challenged.

Dick walked rapidly onward through the timber and darkness.

Two miles from New Brunswick he came to a farmhouse.

Dick had been here before.

He knew that the man was a strong patriot.

He called the man to the door, revealed his identity and asked if he might have the use of a horse for two or three days.

"Sartinly, sartinly," said the farmer; "I'm glad ter 'commydate ye, Dick; ye kin hev ther best horse I've got on ther place, an' ye kin keep him er week ef ye wanten."

Dick thanked the farmer, earnestly, and fifteen minutes later he was riding northward toward Morristown at a gallop.

Dick reached Morristown at about two o'clock in the morning.

He went at once to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and throwing himself down on his cot was soon asleep.

When the "Liberty Boys" awoke in the morning and found Dick in their midst, they were delighted.

He had been away nearly a week, during which time he had been in the camp of the enemy.

That he had been in deadly danger every day and every hour, they well knew, and as they almost worshipped their young commander, it was only natural that they should be delighted to see him back, safe and sound.

"I think I'll have some work for you to do, boys," said Dick, when they were eating breakfast.



Then he went ahead and told the youths about the party of redcoats which was going to come up toward Morristown on a reconnoitring expedition.

"We'll spread a net for them, boys," he said, "and if we have good luck we ought to be able to capture all of the redcoats."

"Oh, we'll do it, all right!" declared Bob Estabrook, confidently.

"Yes, yes, so we will!" cried Mark Morrison.

The other youths all expressed a similar opinion.

Immediately after breakfast Dick made his way to headquarters.

The commander-in-chief was delighted to see Dick.

"I was beginning to be somewhat uneasy, Dick," he said; "you have been gone longer than is usual with you; I feared that the redcoats had discovered that you were a spy and made a prisoner of you."

Dick smiled.

"No, your excellency," he said, "they did not discover that I was a spy, though they did suspicion that such was the case; it took me longer than usual to find out what I wished to, that was all."

"And you learned something, then?"

"Yes, your excellency."

Then Dick told all that he had learned during the time that he had been in the British encampment.

When he had finished, Dick asked permission to take his "Liberty Boys" and sufficient additional force to make sure work of the affair and go and head off the party of British and effect its capture.

"You have my permission to do this, Dick," said the commander-in-chief; "but you must take plenty of men along with you. You should have five hundred, at least."

"Very well, your excellency, I will take four hundred in addition to my "Liberty Boys;" this will make five hundred in all, and with that number, I think, we shall have no difficulty in capturing the entire British force."

"I hope you will succeed, Dick, and I think that you will do so; let's see, when will the British force reach this vicinity?"

"They expect to leave New Brunswick some time this forenoon and encamp within five miles of here this evening."

"Have you any idea where they will make their camp?"

"Yes, your excellency, as I understand it, they expect to camp in the timber at a point near the headwaters of the Passaic River."

"Ah! somewhere in the vicinity of Baskingridge, eh?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Very well; go ahead. Be as careful as you can; do

your best and succeed in your undertaking, if it is possible for you to do so."

"I will do my best."

"I know that you will, Dick."

After some further conversation, Dick took his departure.

He returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

"What success, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, eagerly.

"The best in the world, Bob," was the reply.

"Then we are to go and attempt to make the capture of the British force?"

"Yes, Bob."

"Hurrah!"

All the youths were delighted.

Dick told the "Liberty Boys" to begin making preparations for the work before them, and then he went out and picked out four companies of regular soldiers.

He showed the captains of these companies a written order from General Washington to the effect that they were to accompany Dick and be subject to his orders.

This suited the soldiers very well.

They all liked Dick and were quite willing to be commanded by him.

He told the captains of the companies what it was that he was going to try to do.

They were right in for the work at once, and began getting their men ready for the work which was to be done.

At about five o'clock in the afternoon the party of five hundred patriots left the patriot encampment and marched off toward the south.

It was just about seven o'clock when they reached the timber in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Passaic River.

There was only one road leading from the southward in this vicinity, and Dick was sure that the party of redcoats would come over this road.

At a point about a mile and a half from Baskingridge near where a bridge crossed the Passaic, there was an opening of a couple of acres in extent in the timber and right by the roadside.

Dick decided that this would be the point where the redcoats would make their encampment.

He at once made arrangements to spread a net which would be sure to catch the enemy.

He arranged his men in the shape of a horseshoe, the open side being on the south, from which direction the redcoats would approach.

The redcoats would thus ride right into the snare, and once in they would be unable to get out again.

Dick could await a favorable opportunity and by taking



them by surprise, could, in all probability, capture them without the shedding of a drop of blood.

Dick arranged his men, and, with his "Liberty Boys," took up his position just across the bridge over the Passaic.

It was now quite dark, and Dick did not think they would have long to wait.

He was right about this.

They had not been in position more than twenty minutes when the sound of hoofbeats was heard.

"The British are coming!" was the word which went from lip to lip, running entirely around the giant, human horseshoe.

The moon was up and shining, and, as Dick had anticipated, the instant the redcoats saw the opening by the roadside they decided to encamp there.

"Halt!" cried one of the officers. "We will camp here for the night, men."

This was welcome intelligence, and the redcoats hastened to ride into the opening and dismount.

"As soon as the men have tethered their horses, station sentinels, sergeant," said one of the officers; "then while the men are getting their suppers, Captain Carleton and I will ride on into Baskingridge, which place cannot be more than a mile or so distant."

"Very well, captain," was the reply.

"We will be back in a couple of hours," the officer added; "come, captain, let's be going."

"All right, I'm ready."

Then the officers rode onward and a few moments later, were crossing the bridge over the Passaic.

Just as the two British officers reached the other end of the bridge, Dick and his boys rushed from their ambush and called upon them to surrender.

At the same instant, Dick fired a pistol shot.

This was the signal for the entire patriot force to close in upon the redcoats and enmesh them in the folds of the net which had been so neatly spread for their reception.

The two officers attempted to parley.

"What does this mean?" cried one.

"It means that you are our prisoners!" cried Dick. "Dismount at once and do not attempt to offer resistance; it will be the worse for you if you do!"

The officers saw that it would be useless to offer resistance, and, like sensible men, they promptly surrendered.

They dismounted and their hands were tied together behind their backs in a twinkling.

Then leaving them in charge of a couple of "Liberty Boys," Dick and his comrades rushed forward to assist in capturing the main body of the redcoats.

The redcoats had been taken entirely by surprise.

That they were in danger had been the thing farthest from their minds.

This made their capture an easy matter.

When they were ordered to surrender, and to offer resistance at their peril, and saw themselves surrounded by at least twice their own number, they made a virtue of necessity, and cried out that they would surrender.

This settled the matter.

Their arms were quickly taken away from them, and then a wholesale tying of the arms of the prisoners was indulged in.

They were soon helpless.

Dick's plan had been a complete success.

The "Liberty Boys' net had been spread with the result that two hundred redcoats had been caught in it.

Doubtless Harold Morton, the good-hearted young redcoat, often wondered why his roommate, the supposed country youth, never returned to New Brunswick.

Had he known that "Tom Todd" was the famous patriot scout and spy, Dick Slater, he would not have wondered.

## THE END.

The next number (45) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS WORRIED; OR, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DICK SLATER," by Harry Moore.

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